

AT AN ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, VIRGINIA HELD ON THE 2<sup>nd</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER, 2013 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE BOARD CHAMBERS, MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, 755 ROANOKE STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA:

PRESENT:	James D. Politis	-Chair
	William H. Brown	-Vice Chair
	Mary W. Biggs	-Supervisors
	Gary D. Creed	
	Matthew R. Gabriele	
	Annette S. Perkins	
	Christopher A. Tuck	
	F. Craig Meadows	-County Administrator
	Martin M. McMahon	-County Attorney
	Ruth Richey	-Public Information Officer
	Bob Pearsall	-GIS Director
	Randy Wertz	-Voter Registrar

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order.

### **INTO WORK SESSION**

On a motion by Mary W. Biggs, seconded by William H. Brown and carried unanimously,

BE IT RESOLVED, The Board of Supervisors hereby enters into Work Session for the purpose of discussing the following:

#### **1. On-Campus Polling Precinct**

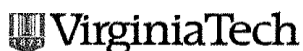
The vote on the forgoing motion was as follows:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>
Gary D. Creed	None
Annette S. Perkins	
William H. Brown	
Mary W. Biggs	
Christopher A. Tuck	
Matthew R. Gabriele	
James D. Politis	

## On-Campus Polling Precinct

The County Administrator provided a brief history on investigating a more conveniently located on-campus polling place at Virginia Tech. The Student Government Association has requested Montgomery County Electoral Board and Virginia Tech work together to establish a suitable location after the 2012 Presidential Election that left students in lines for hours at the Virginia Tech Montgomery Executive Airport polling place. The Electoral Board and Virginia Tech have been in discussions since early 2013 regarding the request.

The Virginia Tech Student Government Association adopted a resolution in November 2013 as follows:



Student Government Association (SGA)  
321 Squires Student Center  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
(540) 231-8631  
E-mail: [ssga@vt.edu](mailto:ssga@vt.edu)  
[www.sga.vt.edu](http://www.sga.vt.edu)

(Fall Semester 2013)

Senate Sponsor: Amanda Lemons

House Sponsor: Paul S. Rice

### **Resolution for On-Campus Voting**

**Whereas**, over nine thousand students live on Virginia Tech's campus, a large number of whom have no cars; and

**Whereas**, voters aged 18-24 have historically low turnout rates, and a more accessible polling place will increase student voter turnout; and

**Whereas**, the need for a more accessible polling place became abundantly clear to the SGA Legislative Branch after the 2012 Election Day left over 2000 students in lines for hours, which discouraged voters from voting; and

**Whereas**, the current polling place for most residential students is almost two miles away from campus at the Virginia Tech Montgomery Executive Airport forcing students to bike, carpool, or take shuttles to vote; and

**Whereas**, having an easily accessible place to vote would increase student civic engagement and political efficacy in the Virginia Tech community; and,

**Whereas**, Virginia Tech's campus could readily support the Election Day operations for its residential students; and,

**Whereas**, Montgomery County has pledged to not create precinct lines dividing communities, but the campus community, one of the most identifiable communities in the county, has been divided, as made clear by the Montgomery County "Street File Listing by Locality" document; and,

**Whereas**, political student organizations from across the spectrum, including College Republicans at Virginia Tech and Young Democrats at Virginia Tech, have stated their support for this nonpartisan civic engagement effort; and

**Whereas**, having a polling place on campus has received support from organizations including the Montgomery County Board of Elections, Office of the President of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg Town Council members, as well as, multiple professors and students; then

**Therefore be it resolved,** that the Student Government Association at Virginia Tech solemnly endorses:

- i. Virginia Tech administration and the Montgomery County Board of Elections work together to establish a suitable location for a polling location in accordance with Election Day rules set forth by the Federal Election Commission, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Montgomery County, and Virginia Tech; and
  - ii. The Montgomery County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff to establish a new precinct only for on-campus students that are registered Virginia voters for the purposes of increasing the student civic engagement and voter turnout.
- 



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November 30, 2013  
On-Campus Polling Place Talking Points

**A more conveniently located on-campus polling place will better serve student voters.**

An increase in the distance between a voter and the voter's polling place can greatly reduce turnout, which is especially important for students who may not have the same transportation options as other local residents.<sup>1</sup>

Helping college students vote is especially important because of the unique barriers to voting that affect them. In the 2010 midterm election, census data showed that more college students who did not vote cited reasons that have more to do with a lack of information and accessibility than a lack of interest<sup>2</sup>.

Putting a polling place on a college campus can help to ensure a lifetime of participation in elections. Studies consistently show that young people who vote early make it a lifelong habit.<sup>3</sup>

Voting off-campus may be particularly challenging for students who have hectic class schedules, limited transportation options, or limited knowledge of the local area.

**On-campus polling places have been successful at other institutions in Virginia.**

In July 2011, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the creation of a precinct to serve George Mason University students on campus<sup>4</sup>. Since then, seven elections have been held on the campus manned by dozens of student volunteers. Of the 6,000 precinct residents, approximately 3,000 are registered to vote.<sup>5</sup>

In October 2011, Lynchburg City Council decided to redraw voting lines, creating a new precinct at Liberty to be used by the 4,122 students living on campus and registered to vote in the city at that time. Over 590 votes, the most at any precinct in the state, were cast at that location for the first election it held, the Republican presidential primary in March 2012.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joshua J. Dyck and James G. Gimpel, "Distance, Turnout, and the Convenience of Voting," *Social Science Quarterly* 86 (2005): 531-548.

<sup>2</sup> "Why Young People Don't Vote," The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, accessed November 30, 2013, <http://www.civicyouth.org/why-young-people-dont-vote/>.

<sup>3</sup> "Voting is a Habit," *Young Voter Strategies*, February 2007, accessed November 30, 2013, [http://www.rockthevote.com/assets/publications/research/rtv\\_voting\\_is\\_a\\_habit-2007.pdf](http://www.rockthevote.com/assets/publications/research/rtv_voting_is_a_habit-2007.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Erin Cushing, "Student Convince Fairfax Board to Create Mason Polling Place," November 2, 2011, accessed November 30, 2013, <http://news.gmu.edu/articles/7947>.

<sup>5</sup> Buzz McClain, "Mason's Busy Polling Place Gives Voice, and Hope, for 'Future of Democracy,'" November 7, 2013, accessed November 30, 2013. <http://newsdesk.gmu.edu/2013/11/masons-busy-polling-place-gives-voice-hope-future-democracy/>.

<sup>6</sup> Liberty University News Service, "Students vote on campus for first time," March 6, 2012, accessed November 30, 2013, <http://www.liberty.edu/news/index.cfm?PID=18495&MID=49636>.

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VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

The County Attorney and the County's GIS staff have been working to identify a new polling place on Virginia Tech's Campus. Bob Pearsall, GIS Director, provided a map of the current precincts and a map of proposed changes to precincts surrounding the VT Campus that include changes to the A-2, A-3, E-3 and F-1 polling places. The proposed change creates a smaller E-3 polling precinct which includes only students. A location for the polling place is still to be determined.

### **OUT OF WORK SESSION**

On a motion by Matthew R. Gabriele, seconded by Mary W. Biggs and carried unanimously,

BE IT RESOLVED, The Board of Supervisors ends their Work Session to return to Regular Session.

The vote on the forgoing motion was as follows:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>
Annette S. Perkins	None
William H. Brown	
Mary W. Biggs	
Christopher A. Tuck	
Matthew R. Gabriele	
Gary D. Creed	
James D. Politis	

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned to Monday, December 9, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

APPROVED	ATTEST:
James D. Politis	F. Craig Meadows
Chair	County Administrator